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# Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /022 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0222

FOR AF/E

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (RICHARDSON, WILLIAM)
SUBJ: STAFFDEL RICHARDSON

FOLLOWING MEMCON RICHARDSON CONVERSATION WITH CIVIL SERVICE MINISTER DEC 20, 1976

QUOTE:

PARTICIPANTS: ABDULKADER WABERI ASKAR--CIVIL SERVICE MINISTER AND ACTING PRESIDENT; WILLIAM RICHARDSON, SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF; LOUIS F. JANOWSKI, AMERICAN EMBASSY, ADDIS ABABA; THREE FRENCH ADVISORS

TIME AND PLACE: CITE MINISTERIAL DJIBOUTI, TFAI, DEC 20, 1976

SUBJ: RICHARDSON CONVERSATION WITH CIVIL SERVICE MINISTER

LANGUAGE: FRENCH

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AFTER INTRODUCTIONS, THE MINISTER MADE A SHORT OPENING STATEMENT IN WHICH HE STRONGLY EMPHASIZED THAT DJIBOUTI HAD NO INTEREST IN THE COMMUNIST BLOC, IN VIEW OF ITS MUSLIM HERITAGE AND TRADI-
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TIONAL TIES WITH THE WEST. FRANCE HAD BEEN PLAYING ITS PROPER ROLE IN GUIDING DJIBOUTI TO INDEPENDENCE, AND DJIBOUTI WISHED GOOD AND CORRECT RELATIONS WITH ALL STATES. DJIBOUTI WAS A PORT, A RAILROAD, AND AN AIRPORT. THIS WAS HOW DJIBOUTI EARNED ITS LIVELIHOOD, AND IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO MAKE DJIBOUTI AN INTERNATIONAL CENTER.

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MR. RICHARDSON RAISED THE QUESTION OF INTERNAL SUBVERSION, AND THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT NO REAL PROBLEM EXISTED. HE DID NOT FORESEE ANY PROBLEM WITH RESPECT TO EPMG OR GSDR INTERVENTION IN THE TERRITORY.

IN RESPONSE TO RICHARDSON'S QUESTION AS TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF A FRENCH RESIDUAL FORCE, THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT THIS WAS A DECISION FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO MAKE. HE ADDED, HWEVER, THAT DJIBOUTI HAD BEEN FRENCH FOR ALONG TIME, AND THAT DJIBOUTI WISHED TO RETAIN CLOSE TIES WITH FRANCE.

ASKED ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE US, THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT DJIBOUTI WISHED TO RECEIVE US ASSISTANCE AND THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED. HE NOTED THE HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE TERRITORY AND THE NEED TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM.

RICHARDSON THEN ASKED IF DJIBOUTI INTENDED TO MAINTAIN A POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT, OR DID IT EXPECT TO BE TIED TO THE WEST. THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT DJIBOUTI WOULD FOLLOW A PATH OF NEUTRALITY WITHOUT FAVORING ANY ONE COUNTRY, AND THAT PRESIDENT KAMIL HAD STATED THAT DJIBOUTI INTENDED TO JOIN THE OAU AND THE ARAB LEAGUE.

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON THE NATIONALITY PROBLEM, THE MINISTER NOTED THAT THE PROBLEMS WERE ADMINISTRATIVE IN NATURE. IT WOULD NOT BE CLEAR UNTIL JANUARY IF THESE ADMINISTRATIVE ROBLEMS HAD BEEN FULLY SOLVED.

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IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON THE STATUS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP-POPULAR AFRICAN LEAGUE FOR INDEPENDENCE (LPAI) COALITION AND THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF DJIBOUTI, THE MINISTER NOTED THE TWO GROUPS HAD A NITED FRONT, AND THAT HASSAN GOULED, WHO HE ESCRIBED AS BOTH WISE AND PRO-WEST, WOULD DEFNIITELY HAVE ROLE IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT. AHMED DINI WOULD ALSO HAVE A HIGH POSITION IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

ASKED ABOUT THE FUTURE NEEDS OF DJIBOUTI, THE MINISTER NOTED THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THE TERRITORY'S POPULATION LIVED IN DJIBOUTI AND THAT THERE WAS A VERY HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT. DJIBOUTI NEEDED INDUSTRIALIZATION, FACTORIES AND JOBS. THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW PREPARING STUDIES ON THE PROBLEM, IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM WITH THE USG AT A LATER DATE.

RICHARDSON THEN ASKED WHAT WAS THE PERCEPTION OF THE US ROLE. WAS THE US SEEN TO BE SUPPORTING ETHIOPIA? THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT THE GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT THE US WAS ASSISTING ETHIOPIA AND GAVE AS AN EXAMPLE A RECENT BBC REPORT ABOUT A LARGE

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WORLD BANK LOAN TO THE EPMG. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE US WILL BE CONSIDERED A FRIEND, NOTING THE CLOSE TIES OF DJIBOUTI TO FRANCE AND THE WEST, WITH THE US AT THE HEAD OF THE WEST.

REPORTING OFFICER'S COMMENT:

AT THE INTERVIEW WAS HELD IN THE PRESENCE OF THREE NON-PARTI-CIPATING FRENCH ADVISORS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE ASKAR'S CANDOR. A SMALL MAN, HE DID NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING PARTICULARLY WELL-INFORMED OR OF HAVING A STRONG LEADERSHIP PERSONALITY. HE DID, HOWEVER, GIVE A CLEAR IMPRESSION OF BEING BOTH PRO-FRENCH AND PRO-WEST. HIS VIEWS REFLECT THE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED VIEWS OF PRESIDENT ABDULLAH MOHAMED KAMIL, FOR WHOM ASKAR WAS ACTING.

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GDS-DECLASSIFIED 12/31/83
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